

Published: April 12, 2015, *Kokomo Tribune* [Page: A5]

http://www.kokomotribune.com/opinion/editorial-state-s-reefer-madness/article_a734e51c-dfed-11e4-a3e4-47218b351d42.html

Editorial: State's 'Reefer Madness'

THE ISSUE:

A measure to allow cannabidiol, a hemp extract, fails.

OUR VIEW:

Indiana should treat cannabidiol as it would other medications.

Just last month, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed the state's "right to try law" that gives terminally ill patients access to drugs that haven't been approved by the Food and Drug Administration. With Pence at the signing was Jordan McLinn, a 5-year-old with muscular dystrophy, CBS News reported.

The new law gives McLinn access to drugs that are still in development for his untreatable condition.

Which makes us wonder how another experimental medication derived from hemp is so different.

If you're a parent, take a moment to consider the following horrifying scenario: Your 7-year-old child has suffered dearly from chronic, severe epilepsy since they were a toddler. Nothing you can find seems to help at

all. That is, until your doctor introduces you to what you believe might be a magic bullet. Namely, cannabidiol, a non-psychoactive extract derived from hemp. A dozen or so states have made such medications legal for use or study, which is good news. The bad news: you don't live in one of those states. You live in Indiana. What are you to do?

For Brian Bennett and his son this scene wasn't a hypothetical, but their reality. They subsequently moved from the Hoosier state to Colorado, where hemp's cousin, marijuana, is legal for recreational use. As CNHI state reporter Maureen Hayden wrote in a story which we published Friday, this retrograde state of affairs in our state is set to continue indefinitely, thanks to "the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council, which has long opposed efforts to ease marijuana laws and pushed to kill the cannabidiol measure."

Isn't it also ironic that last year, Indiana's lawmakers reclassified hemp as an agricultural commodity? Indiana's currently waiting for Drug Enforcement Agency approval so there's no industrial hemp operations in the state yet.

This isn't about recreational marijuana, or even medical marijuana. Those terms would only serve to confuse the debate here. You can't get high on hemp no matter how hard you try. What we're talking about here is sick kids and their parents. Why must Indiana continue to be stuck in this backward mode when it comes to something this innocuous, especially when we've come so far?

